

Guiding Principles for Shared Governance at NDSU

[SBHE 305.1.4.a](#) states that each President shall ensure effective and broad-based participation in the decision-making process from faculty, staff, student, and others in those areas in which their interests are affected.

The purpose of this document is to outline and clarify the collective understanding of shared governance operations at NDSU. Shared governance has long been a hallmark of higher education's internal governance model. It is a collaborative process involving relevant stakeholders creating, implementing, and upholding policies that affect the educational and working conditions here at NDSU. With shared governance, stakeholders share both the benefits and the responsibilities of governing NDSU.

NDSU affirms its commitment to shared governance, and while the exact processes involved with shared governance may change over time, four fundamental aspects will always be critical to effective shared governance:

- (1) **transparency:** stakeholders will share accurate and relevant information with the other stakeholders about both decisions and the processes that supported those decisions.
- (2) **responsibility:** stakeholders understand that the institution is obligated to be a good steward of its resources.
- (3) **good faith:** the stakeholders will enter into the process with good intentions, making an ethical commitment to seeing processes through.
- (4) **respect:** stakeholders participate in deliberations and dialogue with care and regard for the perspectives of other groups.

Each stakeholder, represented by a governance group, has the right to propose new policies and adjust or amend existing policies, through the appropriate process, as outlined in [Policy 714 – Senate Coordinating Council](#). As stated in the policy, the Senate Coordinating Council “does not approve or disapprove policies but facilitates the policy review process by the various Senates.” Policy 714 covers the responsibilities and procedures for our shared governance model at NDSU.

Additionally, all faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to use their voices and actively participate in the existing governance structures to inform decision making at the university as it seeks to fulfill its mission. It is the prerogative of the faculty, staff, and student governance representatives to voice the concerns of the respective groups they represent in good faith and fair dealing with the administration, and vice versa.

Shared governance means each governing body has the responsibility to inform, educate, and share with its constituents how shared governance is defined at NDSU and the mechanisms by which they can participate in the work. This may require different approaches for different groups of stakeholders.

Rights and Responsibilities

Governance bodies elect representatives for the purposes of observing principles for representation reflecting the view of constituent groups. Therefore, we affirm that senators in each of the groups should adhere to the following:

- as part of their participation in governance activities, consider their role as a representative of the diverse constituencies whom they represent.
- regularly communicate the activities of the governance group to constituents.
- identify multiple clear and transparent opportunities for represented constituents to share views on upcoming items.

I. Definitions

- A. The stakeholder groups (*administration, faculty, staff, and students*) are those defined in [NDSU Policy Manual Section 101](#), “Personnel Definitions” and [NDSU Policy Manual Section 101.1](#) “Employee Group Definitions.”
- B. **Stakeholder** refers to any person or constituency group who is affected by university decisions.
- C. **Constituency** refers to employee groups defined in 101.1 who are represented by governing bodies such as Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, or Student Government.
- D. **Governance body** refers to any formally constituted body that has oversight and decision-making authority about a specific university function, policy, or process (for example, an academic department, a senate or senate committee).
- E. **Transparency.** In the context of governance, transparency means visibility of the rationale, thinking, and information that is considered as part of institutional decision-making to the greatest extent possible within the context of policy.
- F. **Consultation** is defined as the process of engaging the appropriate stakeholders or groups in feedback-gathering activities prior to the finalizing of a decision. Consultation should be focused on gathering perspectives that meaningfully inform the final outcome. Consultation shall occur whenever reasonably possible and appropriate. In instances where consultation has not taken place due to constraints (e.g., legal or budgetary), administration shall share its rationale with the appropriate governance group.

II. **Reference Documents:** The following resources provide an overview of scope, duties, and membership eligibility for the following areas of shared governance at NDSU.

A. General

1. [State Constitution Article VIII - Education](#)
2. [North Dakota Century Code - State Board of Higher Education](#)
3. [Higher Learning Commission Accreditation - Criterion 5. Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning](#)

- B. Faculty
 - 1. [Constitution and Bylaws | Faculty Senate](#)
 - 2. [ND Century Code: Faculties of Institutions under Supervision of State Board of Higher Education](#)
- C. Staff
 - 1. [Constitution and Bylaws | Staff Senate](#)
- D. Student Governance
 - 1. [Student Body Constitution](#)
 - 2. ND Century Code, 15-10-19.1: [Nonresidential and Resident Student for Tuition Purposes Defined](#)
- E. Administration
 - 1. SBHE Policy: [305.1 Institution President Authority and Responsibilities: Contract Terms](#)
 - 2. [SBHE Policy 304.1 Chancellor/Commissioner of Higher Education Authority and Responsibilities](#)
- F. Senate Coordinating Council Documents (Procedure)
 - 1. https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/Senate_Coordinating_Council_Process_rev_5.6.2021.pdf
 - 2. <https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/714.pdf>
- G. North Dakota Century Code
 - 1. [Chapter 15.10.01-65: The State Board of Higher Education](#)